

Operator and manager of unlicensed guesthouses fined

A man and a woman were fined \$8,000 and \$10,000 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts and the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (May 22) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in September and October last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected two suspected unlicensed guesthouses on Spring Garden Lane in Wan Chai and Portland Street in Mong Kok. During the inspections, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented rooms in these guesthouses on an hourly or daily basis.

According to the OLA's records, these guesthouses did not possess licences under the Ordinance on the days of inspection. The man and woman responsible for operating and managing the premises were charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and will lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaeng@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".